



NOV 10 2003

Dear Enrolled Producers:

The purpose of this letter is to advise you of the following changes in the SFCP standards book (*Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program Standards, Effective July 1, 1999*). These changes allow certified flocks participating in the SFCP to acquire lower-status rams without loss of status.

Current scientific information provides evidence that the use of unknown-status rams poses a negligible risk of transmitting scrapie to breeding flocks. Up until now, the SFCP standards have required certified flocks that use rams from flocks that do not participate in SFCP to lose 1 year of status. Since other enrolled flocks, including those that are ready to certify, have been allowed to acquire nonparticipating rams without loss of status, those standards have discouraged owners from certifying their flocks.

In addition to allowing the use of certain lesser-status rams by certified flocks without lowering flock status, this change in guidance will also prevent the immediate upgrading of lesser-status, purchased rams when flocks become certified.

- A. A ram that meets the requirements indicated in the bulleted points of the first paragraph of Part III A.5.a. of the SFCP standards book can be used in or acquired by any SFCP-enrolled flock? including certified flocks? without lowering the flock's status. [The second paragraph of Part III A.5.a. (beginning "Certified flocks can only...") will be deleted when the book is revised.]
- B. A ram joining a higher-status flock will retain the status of its flock of origin.
A ram joining a lower-status flock will take on the status of the lower-status flock.
- C. A ram residing in a higher-status flock will be identified in the flock records with its individual SFCP status date and will advance in the certification program based on this date. If the flock's status is reduced and the ram's individual status is higher than the new flock status date, the ram's status will be lowered to the flock's status date.
- D. Lower-status rams must be kept separate
 - 1. from ewes during lambing, and
 - 2. from lambs less than 6 months of age.
- E. All other requirements of the program related to flock status will continue to apply.



Questions regarding the procedures described in this memorandum should be directed to the Scrapie Unit, National Center for Animal Health Programs, Veterinary Services (VS), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Telephone: 301-734-6954, E-mail: Scrapie Program@aphis.usda.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Diane L. Sutton".

Diane L. Sutton
National Scrapie Program Coordinator
National Center for Animal Health Programs
Veterinary Services